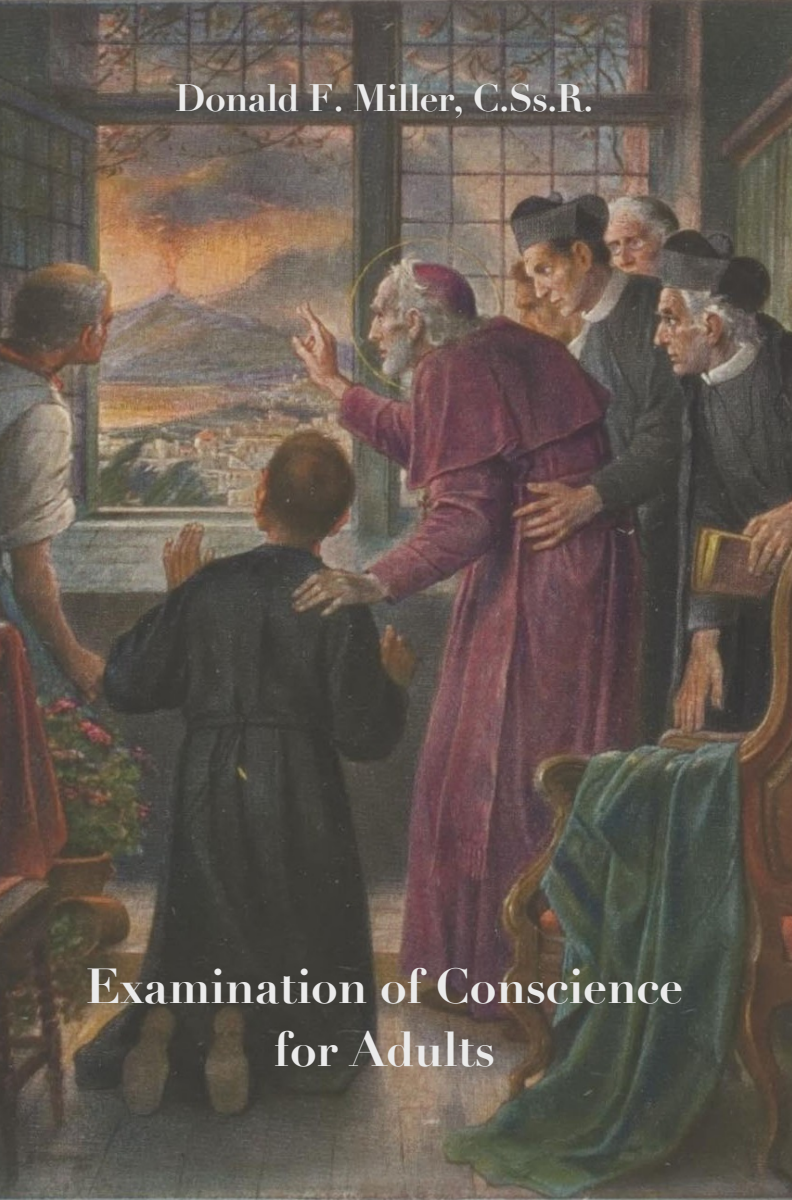
Donald F. Miller, C.Ss.R.



Examination of Conscience for Adults

Examination of Conscience for Adults:

A Comprehensive Examination of Conscience Based on Twelve Virtues for the Twelve Months of the Year

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De H. Alfonsus doet op zijn gebed den Vesuvius bedaren, Windhausen, 1923

Crucifixion with Mary and Saint John Evangelist, Perugino, 1482

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Introduction

Self-examination has always been considered a necessary means of progress in virtue. All Religious Orders and congregations have provision in their rules for at least one daily examination of conscience. While the practice is also necessary for lay people, there have been few booklets offered to them whereby a systematic examination of conscience might be made at definite times. Lists of sins may be found in prayer books and pamphlets, but frequently they lack completeness, or they make no clear-cut distinctions between mortal and venial sin, or they make no reference to the helps and counsels that might build up virtue and prevent sin.

The object of this booklet is to initiate lay people into the practice of concentrating their efforts at self-perfection on one virtue a month. It provides a fairly complete list of mortal sins to be avoided, of venial sins to be corrected, and of helps and counsels that may be practiced. For each month a short explanation of the virtue to be practiced is given, an aspiration is suggested for frequent use, and a prayer is added containing sorrow for the past and resolve for the future.

The division of the obligations of the Christian life into twelve virtues is not one that can be made without some degree of arbitrary arrangement of material. There will be overlapping, some repetition, and not always a strictly logical inclusion of questions under a given head. The

practical purpose has been kept in mind, rather than the theoretical; an effort has been made to bring into each month reminders of some of the fundamental obligations every Christian has, as these can be related to given virtues.

A warning should be given to souls who are inclined to scrupulosity. Such souls are frequently disturbed by reading lists of sins, because they erroneously think themselves guilty where they are not guilty at all. They should have permission of their confessor before they undertake to make a minute examination of conscience, and in every doubt must obey their confessor blindly. Aside from the scrupulous, some persons may find doubts arising from certain questions because circumstances not mentioned may confuse particular issues. It is to be remembered at all times that a mortal sin is not committed unless three conditions are present, viz., *sufficient reflection*, *full consent of the will*, and a violation of God's law *in a serious matter*. The mortal sins listed represent only objectively serious matter; if one or both of the other conditions necessary for the commission of a mortal sin be lacking in a particular case, the guilt would not be incurred. In prudent doubt, a confessor should be asked for a solution.

It is recommended that once a week during each month, the examen for that month be read carefully and thoughtfully. On some occasions this would be best done before confession. The ejaculatory prayer of the month should be said frequently every day.

January Faith

Faith is the theological virtue, infused by God, by which we firmly assent to all the truths that God has revealed to mankind because God cannot deceive or be deceived. Faith is the foundation of all justification, the beginning of all supernatural virtue, the starting point of sanctification and perfection. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6).

While faith is infused as a free gift by God, it nevertheless is given in strict accordance with the nature of man, and after it has been given it requires intelligent cooperation lest it be weakened or lost. This cooperation means three things:

1) **Every Catholic must pray for the preservation and increase of his faith.** Ordinarily, prayer is necessary for the attainment of any grace from God; since faith is the greatest grace, one who has received it must pray throughout life for perseverance and strengthening in his faith.

1) **Every Catholic must strive to be faithful to the obligations imposed through faith.** To offend God deliberately and repeatedly is to run the risk of some day finding that faith has been lost through failure to cooperate with God's grace.

2) **Every Catholic must use his mind both to understand the motives for believing God's word**,

> which are perfectly satisfactory to human reason, **and to know the truths revealed by faith**, in which nothing contradictory, nothing inconsistent, nothing intellectually incredible is to be found. On the negative side, this means that every Catholic is bound to preserve himself, in so far as possible, from every influence that would prove dangerous to his faith.

Therefore all sins against faith centre about either the denial of one's faith, or the neglect of means to preserve and increase it, or the deliberate entrance into occasions that might destroy it.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I denied that I was a Catholic, or openly expressed my disbelief in any doctrine of the Catholic faith?

2) Have I affiliated myself, even for a short time, with a non-Catholic sect or religious body?

3) Have I suggested or encouraged doubts about the Catholic faith in the minds of others?

4) Have I seriously expressed the opinion that all religions are equally good or equally true or equally pleasing to God?

5) Have I neglected to settle, by reading, studying, consulting, etc., serious doubts about my faith, when such neglect was evidently leading to a loss of faith?

6) Have I, without the necessary permission, read or kept or given to others forbidden books, such as Protestant Bibles, books on the Index of Prohibited Publications, books that pretend or profess to disprove the truth of the Catholic faith or that profess to prove the truth of a religion contrary to my faith?

7) Have I, without a serious reason, associated with persons who tried to destroy my faith?

8) Have I attended meetings or listened to speeches or sermons which I knew would destroy or seriously weaken my faith?

9) Have I joined a secret society forbidden by the laws of the Church, such as the Masons, the Odd fellows, etc?

10) Have I taken part in a Protestant church service?

11) Have I contributed to the advancement of a non-Catholic religious sect or movement as such?

12) Have I consulted a fortune-teller in the serious belief that I could learn something about the future, or made others think that I could tell their future when I knew that there was no adequate natural means of doing so?

13) Have I attended a spiritualistic séance?

14) Have I planned to marry, or actually pretended to enter the state of marriage, before a minister, or a judge, or a civil magistrate? Have I approved of other Catholics doing this or stood up for them when they did it?

15) Have I, without the necessary permission or reason, sent my children to a non-Catholic grade school, or approved of other Catholics doing so? Or without serious reason approved by the diocesan authorities, to a non-Catholic high school or university? Or have I done these things without making any provision to safeguard the faith of my children?

Venial Sins

1) Have I been irreverent in church and before the Blessed Sacrament?

2) Have I disturbed and distracted others in their prayers and devotions?

3) Have I kept others from prayer or devotions for some selfish reason?

4) Have I carefully avoided giving any sign that I was a Catholic because I might have been subjected to some ridicule if I did?

5) Have I read only such books and magazines as might be called dangerous, even though they are not strictly forbidden, e.g., books giving false and worldly views of life, novels that are frothy and barren of any principle?

6) Have I seldom, if ever, made an explicit act of faith?

7) Have I been slow in trying to banish or overcome doubts against faith?

8) Have I been careless and half-hearted in teaching my children to love their faith and to make acts of faith?

9) Have I deliberately passed up direct opportunities of informing others about the Catholic faith by going out of my way to avoid speaking of it?

10) Have I accepted the will of God and believed firmly in His providence in the sorrows of life?

11) Have I been irreverent in the use of sacramentals, such as holy water, the Sign of the Cross, etc.?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I frequently thanked God for my faith?

2) Have I prayed for stronger faith every day?

3) Have I purchased or borrowed books that could enlighten me further about my faith?

4) Have I read any Catholic newspapers or magazines to gain a better knowledge of my faith?

5) Have I thought at all about the important truths of faith: death, judgment, heaven, hell?

6) Have I tipped my hat, or bowed my head, when passing a Catholic church?

7) Have I greeted a priest, as a representative of Christ, when meeting one on the street?

8) Have I visited the Blessed Sacrament when opportunities presented themselves?

9) Have I sacrificed any time or self-interest to attend devotions or sermons not commanded?

10) Have I invited non-Catholics to attend a Catholic service with me, or to read any Catholic literature?

11) Have I placed signs of my faith in my home, such as a crucifix, pictures of the Blessed Mother or the saints?

12) Have I carried a rosary, or worn a medal, or had anything on my person showing my faith?

13) Have I contributed prayers, services, or money to Catholic missionary organizations or laborers for the spread of the faith?

14) Have I tried to see in others, not their faults and sins, but the image of God and the souls for which He shed His Blood?

15) Have I tried every day to recall at set intervals the presence of God near me and within me?

16) Have I, after a serious sin, realized that so long as that sin remained on my soul I was an enemy of God and deserving of being condemned to hell?

Ejaculatory Prayer

Lord, increase our faith! (500 days indulgence) [28]

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, he who followeth Thee walketh not in darkness. Remember that I am one of those to whom Thou hast said: "You are the light of the world." Remember that I must no longer live of myself, but that Thou must live in me. This is impossible unless I first believe all that Thou hast revealed. Therefore permit not that human folly should ever obscure my mind and make me as the blind leading the blind. Grant me a strong faith that I may never cease to think and speak and act according to Thee and Thy holy Gospel. May I firmly believe with an explicit and perfect faith; may I recognize God's presence everywhere; may I never forget, my Jesus, Thy love; may I be constantly mindful of the mystery of Thy Incarnation and life and sufferings, the ineffable grace of Thy Sacraments, the need I have of union with Thee, the necessity of the help of Mary my Mother, the importance of prayer, the value of humility, the strength and wisdom of Thy cross, and the purpose of my life for time and eternity. Grant that my faith may be so firm as to be unmoved by the impulses of fallen human nature; so bright as not to be obscured by the fascination of worthless things; so simple that I may believe with a blind and obedient faith; so efficacious that I may think and speak according to what I believe; so strong that I may resist every temptation of the evil one. Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all my patron saints grant these, my requests. Amen.

"If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

(Romans 10:9)

February Hope

Without the virtue of hope, one not only falls into many sins, but finds it very difficult to lead a cheerful, contented life and to bear the crosses that are the inevitable lot of all mankind. Therefore this examination shall be not only a test of one's relationship to God, but also a study of whether or not his attitude towards life is religiously right and psychologically sound.

Hope is a theological virtue by which we confidently expect the help of God in attaining our eternal happiness, and anything we need as a means to that end. The virtue of hope demands therefore that we firmly believe that God will provide us with sufficient grace to avoid sin, and with sufficient strength to fulfill the obligations imposed upon us, and with sufficient comfort to make every cross bearable, if we do our part. The virtue of hope, therefore, forbids two things and all that is connected with them, viz., presumption and despair.

Presumption is the sin whereby we expect God's help without doing our part, as when we count on God's forgiveness even when we are committing a sin, or put off the renunciation of sin because we expect to have an opportunity to confess just before we die. **Despair is the sin whereby we give up trying** because we do not believe that even God's grace is sufficiently strong to help us overcome our own weakness or to grant us forgiveness.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I denied the necessity of God's help to attain my salvation, believing that I could win heaven by my own efforts alone?

2) Have I said or seriously thought that God was too merciful to condemn anyone to hell, and that, therefore, despite my serious sins, I would surely be saved?

3) Have I continued in a habit of mortal sin because I believed that some day I would certainly have the grace to repent and be forgiven?

4) Have I committed a mortal sin just because I expected God to forgive me in confession afterwards?

5) Have I said or thought that prayer was not necessary for one who made up his mind to be good?

6) Have I neglected saying any prayer whatsoever for as long as a month at a time?

7) Have I refused to pray in a grave temptation because I did not want God to help me overcome it?

8) Have I deliberately entered a serious and unnecessary occasion of sin, thinking that God would miraculously preserve me from sin or graciously forgive me if I fell?

9) Have I induced others to commit a sin by telling them that God would forgive them afterward?

10) Have I said that I did not believe in eternal hell?

11) Have I said or thought that it was impossible for me to overcome a certain passion or sinful habit?

12) Have I believed that because my sins in the past were so numerous or so terrible, I could not expect God to forgive me?

13) Have I quit going to Mass or praying because of the thought, "It doesn't do any good"?

14) Have I seriously complained that God sent me more trials than it was possible for me to bear?

15) Have I stopped praying for the grace to avoid sin and save my soul because God did not grant me a certain material favor for which I prayed?

16) Have I given up trying to overcome interior temptation because God would not take the temptation away?

17) Have I encouraged others to commit sins of impurity because "they could not stop committing them anyway"?

18) Have I used poverty as a reason for committing certain serious sins, because I did not believe that God could give me any material aid?

19) Have I scoffed at the joys of heaven, saying I would prefer to have heaven here on earth?

Venial Sins

1) Have I brooded over my past sins, giving in half-voluntarily to the fear that they might not be forgiven?

2) Have I permitted discouragement to take possession of my heart because of my frequent faults or my lack of progress in virtue?

3) Have I permitted myself to worry excessively over material setbacks and difficulties, as if God did not know them and could not help me?

4) Have I been morose, melancholy, gloomy, in the presence of others, thus making them uncomfortable and unhappy?

5) Have I been overanxious in regard to my health, over-fearful lest some terrible disease might be contracted?

6) Have I complained against God for not preventing the sins of others which injured me in some way?

7) Have I deliberately neglected easy opportunities for prayer and devotion which would have made me stronger in virtue?

8) Have I neglected prayer entirely for days at a time?

9) Have I given in to unreasonable fear of death and of God's judgment?

10) Have I said that I was content to avoid hell, but would not try to avoid or shorten my purgatory?

11) Have I been slothful about trying to acquire the habit of praying in serious temptation?

12) Have I neglected practicing any devotion to the Mother of God, though saints and theologians tell us her help is morally necessary for all?

13) Have I neglected receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion only because I could not feel any profit from them?

14) Have I given up prayer when prayer seemed difficult and uninviting?

15) Have I become so preoccupied working for money or a reputation, or my family, that I did not give myself time to pray or think of doing anything for heaven?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I prayed for the grace of a firmer and stronger hope of eternal happiness?

2) Have I read or meditated about the happiness that God has in store for those who are faithful to Him?

3) Have I tried to increase my hope of heaven by thinking now and then of the pains of hell, and determining to escape them?

4) Have I strengthened my hope of God's help by gazing at or thinking of the crucifix, which reminds us that, since Christ died for us, there is nothing we need that He will refuse us?

5) Have I prayed every morning and evening and during the day, knowing that every prayer would be heard and would make easier my salvation?

6) Have I frequently received Holy Communion, which is called the pledge of immortality?

7) Have I willingly accepted sorrows and trials as reminders that we must suffer on earth to earn heaven?

8) Have I practiced daily devotion to the Mother of God, with childlike confidence that she would help me?

9) Have I trusted in God's grace and at the same time determined to work for my salvation as if it depended on my efforts alone?

10) After a fault, have I joined an act of sorrow to an act of hope that God would give me the grace not to fall again?

Ejaculatory Prayer

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee. (300 days indulgence.) [195]

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the world, Thou who didst ask faith and confidence from all the sick and sore distressed and didst grant to each one according to his faith, grant me the grace of an unshakable hope and confidence in Thee. Let me remember that since Thou didst die for me, there is no good thing Thou wilt ever deny me if only I trust in Thee always. Relying on Thy merits and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary I firmly hope for the pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting. In difficulties, in desolations, in anxieties and trials, make me content to be deprived of all human help and consolation and to be dependent wholly on Thee. Make me remember my weakness and distrust myself so that I shall ever seek Thy help in prayer. Help me to learn that nothing in life is worth possessing if the cost means separation from Thee. Permit me, in the hour of death, to say with all the confidence of Thy saints and martyrs: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever."

March Love of God

The love of God is the highest and strictest obligation binding on all men. No one should ever forget the answer of Christ to the question: "Which is the first and greatest commandment of the law?" His words were simple, direct, forceful: **"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, with thy whole mind and with all thy strength."** Without the fulfillment of this law, therefore, all striving for other virtues and qualities would be without profit.

Every sin ever committed is an action contrary to the love of God. But in this examination of conscience, only those sins and faults shall be included which in some way involve a direct slighting of the person of God or of His authority, or a breaking of those commands which are specifically directed towards the maintenance and strengthening of the love of God in the soul, or an expression of disregard or contempt or hatred of God. An exception shall be made here: all sins committed in speech against God shall be reserved for the examination of next month — on Reverence for God. Of course, the love of God as expressed in love of neighbor shall be reserved for later treatment.

The love of God is the infused theological virtue by which we love God above all other things because of His infinite perfection and lovableness, and manifest that love in thought, word, and deed. (Let it be noted

again that the love of neighbor is really a part of the love of God, because it has the same motive, namely, God Himself, in whom all one's neighbors are to be loved. This will be shown in the examination on the love of neighbor.) **The love of God forbids, in general, the neglect of duties and obligations that spring from love, as well as the misuse or degrading of things given by God or dedicated to Him.**

Mortal Sins

1) Have I neglected to fulfill the precept of going to confession at least once a year?

2) Have I failed to observe the law which commands me to receive Holy Communion during the Paschal season?

3) Have I missed Mass on a Sunday or a holy day without a sufficient reason?

4) Have I, as a mother or father or guardian, caused or permitted my children who are above the age of reason to miss Mass on Sundays or holy days of obligation?

5) Have I induced others to miss Mass on Sundays, or approved of their so doing?

6) Have I without reason come late to Mass, missing the Offertory, or have I left before the Communion of the Mass?

7) Have I tried to do serious bodily injury to any person consecrated to God?

8) Have I engaged in servile work, such as gardening, building, repairing, sewing, laundering, etc., for more than two hours on the Lord's Day, when there was no urgent reason for so doing?

9) Have I made others work on Sunday when it was not necessary?

10) Have I broken a serious vow made to God, by which I had bound myself under pain of mortal sin?

11) Have I committed a sacrilege by receiving the Sacrament of Communion, Confirmation, or Matrimony while in the state of mortal sin?

12) Have I tried to lead a person bound to God by the vow of chastity into sin against his vow?

13) Have I stolen something valuable from the House of God, whether an article used in divine services or money given to the Church?

14) Have I deliberately mocked or made fun of the Sacraments or the Mass or any of the liturgical functions?

Venial Sins

1) Have I been unconcerned and indifferent about acquiring a strong and faithful love of God?

2) Have I performed my external duties to God, such as hearing Mass, saying my prayers, receiving the Sacraments, in a distracted, impersonal, half-hearted manner?

3) Have I seldom, if ever, made a real act of love of God, except such as were implicit in the fulfillment of other duties?

4) Have I been disrespectful to God's very presence in church, by profane and useless talking and worldly actions?

5) Have I failed to think of the passion and death of the Son of God in my own suffering thus permitting myself to grumble and complain instead of making an act of love and submission?

6) Have I been unfaithful to little promises made to God?

7) Have I never shown my love of God by means of gratitude for the many favors He has given me?

8) Have I given in to worldly desires, which I knew in the beginning to be inconsistent with the love of God?

9) Have I been so fond of some venial sin like petty gossip, or vanity, or exaggerating, that I have made no effort to overcome it?

10) Have I never made the good intention of doing everything for love of God?

11) Have I been disrespectful towards or concerning those whom God has placed over me and who represent God?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I made an effort to arouse strong desires of the love of God in my heart?

2) Have I repeated a direct act of love of God in the morning, at definitely proposed times during the day, in moments of suffering and misery, at night before retiring?

3) Have I labored to acquire the habit of frequently renewing my intention of doing all things for the love of God?

4) Have I given any time to the thought of God's goodness, in creating me out of nothing, in redeeming me with His Blood, in raising me to the supernatural state, and surrounding me with means to advance in virtue?

5) Have I trained myself to see God's hand and God's love in the natural blessings I enjoy — blessings of family, friends, education, surroundings, innocent enjoyments, etc. — and then to thank Him by a return of love?

6) Have I frequently turned my mind to the greatest proof of God's love — His death on the Cross — that I might be inspired to stronger love?

7) Have I received Holy Communion frequently, realizing that the best proof of love is union with the one beloved?

8) Have I made special acts of love of God at the time of Mass and Communion, realizing that these bring me closest to God?

9) After a venial sin, have I made an act of love of God and determined to become perfect in my habit of love?

10) Have I subjected all my affections to the love of God, trying to make them perfectly conformed to His will so that I can say I love all things and persons in and with God?

11) Have I readily conformed my will to God's will, not only by keeping His commandments, but also by consenting to His will when He has permitted some misfortune to befall me?

12) Have I tried to know God better that I might love Him more, by reading, listening to sermons, studying?

13) Have I realized that the love of God is not necessarily accompanied by emotional feelings and warm sentiments, and that it is more meritorious if, without these things, I continue the practices of love?

Ejaculatory Prayer

Jesus, my God, I love Thee above all things. (300 days indulgence.) [57]

Prayer

O great Lord of heaven and earth, Infinite Good, infinite Majesty, who hast loved men so tenderly, how is it that Thou art so much despised by them? Yet amongst those men, O my God, Thou hast loved me in a particular manner and hast bestowed on me special graces that have not been given to so many others. And I have despised Thee more than others. I deserve to be cast off on account of my frequent ingratitude to Thee. But Thou hast said that Thou wilt not reject a penitent soul that returns to Thee. My Jesus, I am sorry for having offended Thee. I now acknowledge Thee for my Lord and Redeemer, who hast died in order to save me and to be loved by me. I this day resolve to love Thee with my whole heart, and to love nothing but Thee. I adore Thee for all those who do not adore Thee, and I love Thee for all those who do not love Thee. My Lord, give me Thy love, but a fervent love which will make me forget all creatures; a strong love, which will make me conquer all difficulties in order to please Thee; a perpetual love which will never be dissolved between me and Thee. O Mary, my Mother, fill my heart with love for my Savior!

April Reverence for God

God has made a special commandment out of the natural duty and obligation of respecting His name. That this should be necessary sometimes strikes us as very strange. God is a Father, Provider, Protector, Preserver of us all; He became Man and died for us on the Cross, He resides in the tabernacles of our churches to be near us, and He wants to reward us all with a happiness that will never end.

On the basis of these things we are bound to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and will, and love is diametrically opposed to disrespect, irreverence, scorn, and contempt in using a lover's name. A good mother does not have to command her children not to abuse her name; a worthy father has never been known to have to implore his sons to speak respectfully of him. Yet such is the perversion of human nature in regard to God that He has to make a special commandment that His creatures may not take His name in vain.

The chief forms of irreverence against God are blasphemy, unnecessary swearing, perjury, cursing, and profanity. The questions below deal with all these things according to the guilt they involve.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I denied any of the attributes of God, e.g., saying that He is not all-powerful, all-merciful, all-just, etc.?

2) Have I said that I did not believe in God's providence, either directly by denying that He watches over all who love Him, or indirectly by saying that it is necessary to sin to avoid certain hardships?

3) Have I spoken with contempt of God, or of Christ, or of the Holy Eucharist, or of the Passion of Christ?

4) Have I deliberately expressed the wish that there were no God, so that I could sin without fear of punishment?

5) Have I accused God of cruelty, injustice, discrimination against me, because of some sorrow I had to bear?

6) Have I wished evil to God — for example, that He would be forgotten by men and offended more frequently?

7) Have I spoken slightingly or contemptuously of the Mother of God, or of the saints, or of monks, nuns, priests as such?

8) Have I ridiculed the Sacraments or the Mass or any other holy ceremony?

9) Have I said that God did not and could not have inspired the Bible, or that there are things in the Bible that need not be believed?

10) Have I said that Christ did not found the Church, or that He has not preserved it from error?

11) Have I said that God expects too much of an individual by imposing the ten commandments on him?

12) Have I stated that any one of the commandments of God or precepts of the Church cannot be observed by ordinary folk?

13) Have I said that I owed nothing to God and therefore did not need to go to Church or practice any religion?

14) Have I denied the miracles of our Lord, or attributed them to deceit or natural causes?

15) Have I sworn falsely at a public trial, deliberately telling a falsehood when I had taken an oath to tell the truth?

16) Have I lied about important matters to which I had to swear in drawing up a statement or answering a questionnaire, e.g., pertaining to insurance, getting a position, taxes, etc.?

17) Have I sworn to God that I would keep a certain promise or perform a certain work when I did not intend to do so at all?

18) Have I deliberately called upon God to witness the truth of a lie that I told someone in private life?

19) Have I sworn to God that I would do something gravely unjust, like defrauding a neighbor, taking revenge, hurting someone?

20) Have I deliberately cursed a human being, which means seriously wishing or asking that God condemn his soul to hell or visit some other grave misfortune upon him?

21) Have I twisted the words of Christ or of the Bible into an obscene or evil form?

22) Have I, as a parent or guardian, blasphemed or cursed or sworn falsely before my children or even to my children?

23) Have I encouraged others to commit any of the above sins?

Venial Sins

1) Have I used the name of "God" or "Christ" or "Jesus" or "Lord" as a byword, or as an expression of impatience, or in jest?

2) Have I spoken, not maliciously, but profanely and irreverently, of any holy thing?

3) Have I sworn, i.e., called upon God to witness the truth of what I was saying, when there was no serious reason for so doing, when the matter was trivial or foolish, even though I told no lie?

4) Have I used the language of cursing against inanimate things, or against animals, or against human beings even though I did not really wish the damnation of these last?

5) Have I permitted myself to acquire the habit of using God's name profanely, or of swearing or cursing almost without realization of what I was saying?

6) Have I laughed at others' profane use of God's name or other irreverent speech, as if I thought it amusing and wanted them to continue?

7) Have I neglected to correct a child subject to me, when the child used irreverent or profane language?

8) Have I permitted my children to go about with companions who made frequent use of profanity?

9) Have I repeated the profanity of others as something amusing and clever?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I bowed my head when uttering or hearing the name "Jesus"?

2) Have I said an interior act of adoration, praise, or love, when genuflecting before the Blessed Sacrament?

3) Have I ever offered up an act of reparation to God for the many irreverences in speech committed throughout the world?

4) When hearing someone abusing God's name, have I tried to atone for it by a short prayer in my heart?

5) Have I joined in reciting the divine praises at the end of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, to atone for profane speech?

6) (*for men*) Have I joined the Holy Name Society, taken the pledge against bad language and honestly tried to keep it?

7) In temptations to anger and impatience, when I am inclined to use bad language, do I try to say an interior prayer for patience?

8) Have I learned any ejaculatory prayers, by which I might frequently speak lovingly to God during the day?

9) Have I ever meditated on the folly of any misuse of God's name, because of His greatness and majesty, and because of His goodness to me?

10) Have I shown my displeasure to others when they were constantly misusing God's name?

11) Have I tried to instill in those under my care a deep respect for and love of God, which would prevent them from ever using His name in vain?

12) Have I, in every morning prayer, renewed my resolution not to misuse God's name?

13) Have I, when saying my evening prayers, made an act of sorrow for every sin of speech against God?

Aspiration

Blessed be the name of God. (500 days indulgence if said devoutly on hearing a blasphemy.) [8]

Prayer

My Lord and Savior, who was reviled by the chief-priests, falsely accused by criminals, condemned by Pilate, mocked by the throngs and ridiculed by the soldiers who put Thee to death, let me atone by sorrow and penance for all my sins and the sins of the world against Thy holy name. Teach me to use the great gift of speech Thou hast bestowed upon me to honor and praise Thee for the rest of my life. Grant me the power to silence unholy language on the lips of others, and to teach those dependent upon me the reverent and holy use of Thy name. With all the mountains and hills I praise Thee; with all the seas and rivers I glorify Thee; with all the plants and animals I honor Thee as Lord and Master. May the heavens and earth be filled with Thy Glory; and may the lips of all men be taught to acclaim Thy goodness, Thy mercy, and Thy love.

"To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

(1 Timothy 1:17)

May Love of Neighbor (positive obligations)

The love of one's neighbor is essentially bound up with the love of God. St. John put the matter simply when he said: **"If any man say that he loves God and hateth his neighbor, that man is a liar and the truth is not in him."** This stands to reason when one considers that God, whom we are bound to love first and foremost and with all our hearts and souls, loves every human being whom He created and desires his salvation. Hence it would be a contradiction to profess love of God and at the same time to exclude a neighbor from our love.

The object of all love is the good of the one loved. **The object of love of God is the honor and glory of God; the object of love of neighbor is the welfare of our fellowmen, both spiritual and temporal, and through that the honor and glory of God.** Therefore the love of neighbor imposes many positive duties upon us, such as almsgiving, correction, forgiveness, etc., each one of which is directed towards the well-being and happiness of our neighbor; at the same time it forbids certain sins which would bring unhappiness, spiritual or temporal, to a neighbor. In the following exam the positive duties will be enumerated; in the next chapter, the questions will be based on the sins that must be avoided by one who wishes to practice true love of neighbor.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I, over a long period, refused to give any alms for the relief of the needy, even though I had many opportunities and sufficient means without depriving myself or my family of the necessities of life?

2) Have I, on un-Christian principles, refused to give any aid to missionaries working for the salvation of abandoned souls, though I could have given without great sacrifice?

3) As a doctor or a nurse, have I refused to give my needed services to someone in extreme danger of death because I knew there was no hope of being paid?

4) Have I demanded gravely exorbitant and unreasonable fees from those who needed my services?

5) Have I deliberately permitted a person to die without a priest and without religious ministrations?

6) Have I, out of human respect or fear of what others might think, failed to assist the dying spiritually when I knew they needed my help?

7) Have I squandered or given away money outside my home to the extent that it left my immediate family in want of necessary things?

8) Have I refused to remind someone of the danger of his state when I knew that that person had committed a

mortal sin and that my warning alone would probably awaken repentance?

9) Have I refused to warn someone subject to my influence when I knew that person was about to commit a mortal sin and that I could easily and probably prevent it?

10) As a husband or wife have I made no effort to prevent mortal sins of my partner?

11) As a superior or one in authority have I neglected my duty of preventing those in my charge from committing mortal sin, or correcting them after they had fallen?

12) Have I failed to report to someone in authority the certain sins of a neighbor, which I knew were doing harm to innocent persons or to the community as a whole?

13) Have I done nothing to prevent the circulation of obscene books and magazines when I had the opportunity?

14) As a public official, have I permitted evil persons, such as abortionists, dope-peddlers, obscene book-dealers to continue their illegal and immoral practices?

15) Have I permitted another to suffer grave injustice or mistreatment when my authority or influence could have prevented it?

16) Have I refused in my heart to forgive a person who has injured me?

17) Have I over a considerable period of time refused to talk to or acknowledge someone who has wronged me?

18) When I myself was guilty of doing evil against my neighbor, have I refused in word or in deed to show that I was sorry and wished to be forgiven?

19) When mutual offense was given between myself and another, have I refused to make any advances toward reconciliation unless the other person made them first?

20) Have I, by silence or approval, failed to prevent the serious defamation of another's character when I could have done so?

Venial Sins

1) Have I been miserly and grudging in giving alms for the relief of the poor?

2) Have I been careless and negligent in my care of the sick who were dependent on me?

3) Have I failed to consider the poverty of others in charging them for my services?

4) Have I complained about being asked frequently to give alms for the salvation of abandoned souls at home or abroad?

5) Have I, as a well-to-do person, given far less than I could easily have contributed for the relief of the needy?

6) Have I measured my charity only by what others gave, or by what I might receive in return, instead of by my ability to give and the need of others?

7) Have I demanded publicity and praise for every alms I gave?

8) Have I been ashamed or afraid to rebuke others for evil, even though I was not bound under pain of mortal sin to do so?

9) Have I, as a parent or guardian, negligently permitted those under my care to go uncorrected in their venial faults?

10) Have I nursed resentment against others, even though I did make an effort at forgiveness?

11) Have I allowed my sensitiveness to lead to hurt feelings and coolness towards others?

12) Have I failed to try to make others happy and comfortable, giving in to morose, gloomy, selfish moods?

13) Have I rejected ready-made opportunities to comfort someone in sorrow, or to encourage someone in danger of despair?

14) Have I gone out of my way to evade an opportunity to enlighten someone on religious truth?

15) Have I permitted gossip and petty tale-bearing to go on in my presence without an effort to change the subject?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I tried to deepen my faith in the truth that every act of charity towards a neighbor is also an act of love of God?

2) Have I tried to make some sacrifice in giving alms for the relief of the needy?

3) Have I cheerfully given as much as I could spare for the salvation of abandoned souls?

4) Have I supported and strengthened the St. Vincent de Paul Society either as a member or as a contributor?

5) Have I frequently recalled the principle of the stewardship of wealth, viz., that I am to be God's administrator of the things I possess or gain?

6) Have I faced the truth that I shall take nothing with me beyond death, and that the memory and merit of deeds of charity will then be my greatest consolation?

7) Have I recalled, when hurt by others, how God has forgiven me for my many sins, and have I tried to forgive in the same generous spirit?

8) Have I been quick to show my sorrow in some way when I have, either consciously or inadvertently, given pain to others?

9) Have I prayed for others, especially when tempted to angry thoughts and feelings?

10) Have I prayed daily for my parents and all my benefactors?

11) Have I adopted the twofold motto:

(1) never to give pain and

(2) to add to the happiness of others whenever possible?

Aspiration

Sweet Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us and on our erring brothers. (300 days indulgence.) [202]

Prayer

O loving and merciful Savior, enkindle in my heart a fire of charity towards my neighbor like unto Thine own. Thou didst spend Thyself in behalf of others; Thou didst suffer cold and heat, hunger and thirst, poverty and want, a bitter passion and painful death to save others from their sins and to bring them happiness. Thou didst say that charity would be the mark of Thy true disciples, and didst promise that whatever we do for others will be accepted as done for Thee. I am sorry for all my past neglect of opportunities to help others; for all my selfishness and pride and greed; for all my failure to lead souls nearer to Thee. Grant me the grace to be kind and considerate in my words, thoughtful and helpful in my actions, generous and forgiving towards my enemies, and mindful always that I am bound to love others as myself for the love of Thee. Give me a great zeal for souls, that I may be inspired to use every means within my power to enlighten the ignorant, to

win sinners away from their sins, and to assist all whom I may meet to place their hope and trust in Thee. O Mary, mother of mercy and compassion, obtain for me the grace of true charity and fraternal love.

"Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us. If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother; he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother."

(1 John 4:19-21)

June Love of Neighbor (negative obligations)

Besides the positive duties of fraternal charity, such as almsgiving, correction, forgiveness, etc., there are many sins to be avoided in the practice of the same virtue, and these may be listed under the head of its negative obligations.

Every human being has it in his power not only to help his neighbor, but also to hurt him. This latter may take the form of temporal harm, as it does in the sins of hatred, slander, detraction, and similar sins, or it may do eternal harm as in the case of scandal and cooperation in another's sins. Each of these topics has a wide variety of applications, of which the chief ones are touched on in this examen.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I hated others, which means actually and deliberately wishing them grave harm on earth or the loss of their souls?

2) Have I callously rejoiced over the serious misfortunes that came to others, not because they might be turned away from sin thereby, but because it pleased me to see them suffer?

3) Have I sought opportunities to revenge myself on others by inflicting serious pain on them?

4) Have I slandered others, i.e., attributed serious sins to them which they did not commit, or of which I had no evidence?

5) Have I ruined the reputation of others, telling their secret serious sins to persons who could not otherwise have known and who had no reason to know these sins?

6) Have I lied in order that I might gain from another's serious loss?

7) Have I directly desired and tried to lead another into sin, because I wanted to turn him away from religion?

8) Have I induced another to sin to gratify my own passions?

9) Have I tried to induce another person to sin seriously, even though I did not succeed?

10) Have I advised or otherwise induced persons to practice contraception, or abortion, or to get a divorce and remarry?

11) Have I taught employees or others under my supervision how to cheat in business for the sake of profit?

12) Have I sold or given away obscene magazines, bad pictures, or contraceptives, or other things designed for sin?

13) Have I destroyed or lessened the faith of others by speaking contemptuously about religion, or the Church, or priests, etc.?

14) Have I advised or encouraged Catholics not to send their children to a Catholic school?

15) Have I urged another to keep on drinking until he became intoxicated?

16) Have I sold liquor to persons when I knew they were already intoxicated and would keep on drinking, or when I knew they were about to become intoxicated?

17) Have I committed a mortal sin that did not involve others, knowing, however, that my example would probably lead others to do the same?

18) Have I given occasion to evil thoughts in others by gravely immodest dress, looks, words, or actions?

19) Have I cooperated with another in the commission of a mortal sin — for example, of stealing, by providing the necessary means or the necessary occasion?

20) Have I helped doctors perform illegal operations, or businessmen to consummate unjust transactions, or heretics to spread false doctrines?

21) Have I assisted at the invalid marriage of a Catholic before a judge or minister, or taken part in any non-Catholic religious ceremony?

22) Have I deprived an unborn child of its right to life by causing an abortion, or paying for an abortion, or cooperating in it in some other way?

Venial Sins

1) Have I been touchy and sensitive towards those around me?

2) Have I permitted jealousy of another who was promoted ahead of me to show itself in any conduct?

3) Because I did not like others, did I refuse to cooperate with them in work we were given to do?

4) Have I engaged in petty gossip about my neighbors?

5) Have I told my friends the unkind remarks others made about them, thus fomenting ill-will?

6) Have I attributed bad motives to others when I could not be certain of their motives?

7) Have I hurt others by my flare-ups of anger and impatience?

8) Have I made cutting, sarcastic remarks to others?

9) Have I contributed to the venial sins of others by unreasonably teasing or annoying them?

10) Have I lessened the fear of sin in others by thoughtlessly making light of some sin?

11) Have I led others into venial sin by suggestion or bad example?

12) Have I prevented others from performing a good work by dissuading them from it?

13) Have I committed venial sins in the presence of children, knowing that they might possibly imitate me?

14) Have I approved the venial sins of others by providing them with justifying reasons?

15) Have I failed to remove the possibility of scandal being taken from some good action of mine when I could easily have done so?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I pondered the awful meaning of the Savior's words: "If anyone scandalize one of these my little ones, it were better for him that a millstone be hanged around his neck and he be cast into the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6)?

2) Have I tried to cultivate a genuine zeal for souls, which will show itself first and foremost by a ceaseless effort to prevent sin?

3) Have I a wholesome disregard of human respect, which makes so many people afraid to try to prevent sin?

4) Have I realized the far-reaching power of my example, which influences others for good or bad even when I am unaware of that influence?

5) Have I an earnest desire to offset the power of Satan, who is constantly trying to lead others into sin?

6) Do I guard my words and conduct especially in the presence of children, knowing their great susceptibility to imitate older people?

7) Do I remember these words of Christ, which apply to sins against charity: "Whatsoever you have done to the least of my little ones, you have done it to me" (Matthew 25:40)?

Aspiration

O my God, I love Thee, and I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. (Indulgence of three years.) [26]

Prayer

O patient Jesus, how unworthy I am of Thee! Thou wast all charity towards Thy persecutors; I am so easily moved to hatred and rancor towards my enemies! Thou didst pray so lovingly for those who crucified Thee, and I so often seek revenge against those who offend me! Thy words were always words of kindness and compassion, or words of rebuke only when rebuke was necessary to win

back a sinner's love; my words are so often inspired by dislike and ill-will towards others! Thou didst die to prevent sin, and I am one of those who so often made Thy death in vain by leading others into sin by my example or my cooperation. I am sorry now for all the harm I have done to souls that Thou didst purchase with Thy Precious Blood; I promise now to make atonement, and to be ready to lay down my life for the salvation of my neighbor. Grant me the grace to remember the power of my example and my words and my actions over the lives of others; let me say or do nothing that might bring pain to one of the little ones beloved by Thee. O Mary, who didst add thy sufferings to the sufferings of Jesus in behalf of sinners, accept the sacrifices I shall make in behalf of charity and unite them to thine, that with thee and in thee I may help to save many souls.

"A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another."

(John 13:35, 36)

July Justice

Among the virtues that have suffered most in modern times, one of the outstanding is that of justice. It has been attacked by many false principles, such as: "Business is business," "You can't get ahead without some sharp dealing," and "So long as a thing is legal it is O.K." Such disregard of the principles of justice between man and man has gradually distorted the necessary distinctions between "mine" and "thine" until in some instances the conscience is completely dulled.

Despite all popular notions to the contrary, justice is still an essential part of the natural law, and every sin and fault against it will be punished by God. **It is defined as the virtue whereby a man respects the rights of others to what they possess; whereby he gives to every man what is his due, and takes from no man anything except that to which he has a just title.** Just titles for the acquisition of material things are:

1) occupation, e.g., settling on unowned and unclaimed land, finding a lost article without trace of the owner, etc.;

2) the acceptation of increase, fruit, or additional value that arises in a thing already possessed;

3) exchange of material things with other men, either thing for thing, or money for thing, or services for thing, etc.;

4) heredity.

Any taking of material things from others without one of these titles or a title akin to one of them is injustice. It can readily be seen, therefore, that there are many ways in which justice can be violated. The principal ones are outlined in the questions below.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I directly stolen anything of considerable value from another, i.e., either

> (1) of great value to the person involved, as one or two dollars might be to a poor person, or five dollars might be to a person of more means; or
>
> (2) of great value in itself and in the common estimation of society, so that even if it were taken from a corporation or a very rich person, it would still be considered a grave injustice?

2) Have I stolen a considerable sum of money or valuable articles from a church, which adds sacrilege to the sin of theft?

3) Have I stolen small sums from a person or corporation with the intention of continuing the practice over a period of time?

4) Have I actually continued to steal small amounts at regular intervals and so taken a large sum over a period of time?

5) Have I joined with others in stealing, each one agreeing to take a little, but the total amounting to a grave sum?

6) Have I failed to make restitution for grave thefts when I could have done so?

7) Have I accepted stolen goods from another, either as a gift or a sale, to be used by myself or sold again?

8) Have I willfully injured the property of another to a serious extent?

9) Have I refused to pay for another person's property that I have willfully and seriously damaged?

10) Have I defrauded another of something valuable, to which he had a right, by telling a lie, or giving false testimony, or secretly changing a contract or a will?

11) Have I acquired the property of another through deceit, lying, misrepresentation, etc., or sold a bad investment in the same way?

12) Have I found something of considerable value and kept it when I knew the owner, or failed to try to find the owner when there was a possibility of doing so?

13) Have I deprived my family of a decent living by keeping my money for myself or foolishly spending it?

14) Have I, as executor or official representative of another in business matters, enriched myself or others by

acting contrary to his known will, or refused to carry out his express will in distributing his goods?

15) Have I given short weight or measure in selling things to others, either to the extent of a grave amount on one occasion, or by cheating in small amounts regularly and continuously?

16) Have I charged a gravely exorbitant price for something because I knew that somebody would pay that much?

17) Have I lied about the quality of something I sold or exchanged, thus cheating another gravely?

18) Have I enriched myself by paying gravely inadequate wages to those who worked for me?

19) Have I campaigned and conspired to prevent laborers from obtaining a living wage?

20) Have I cheated my employer by seriously neglecting the work I was hired to do?

21) Have I supported communists or racketeers in making unjust demands upon employers?

22) Have I cooperated in sabotage or the destruction of property because of labor disputes?

23) Have I cheated or deceived a partner in business so that there was a gravely unjust distribution of profits?

24) Have I bribed others to give me contracts to which I had no right, so that somebody was unjustly deprived of gain?

25) Have I taken bribes for the use of my authority either in business or public life, to give unjust preferences or awards to others?

26) As an official of the people, have I accepted bribes on condition that I would permit evil or allow it to go unpunished?

27) Have I cheated in gambling, or offered fixed devices for gambling to others, thus winning valuable stakes to which I had no right?

28) Have I evaded paying any just and grave debt I had incurred?

Venial Sins

1) Have I deliberately stolen anything of small value, even though it was worth very little?

2) Have I used the property of others without their permission?

3) Have I damaged things belonging to others by carelessness and misuse?

4) Have I borrowed things from others, such as books, articles of clothing, etc., and never returned them?

5) Have I kept lost articles of small value when I knew or could find the owner?

6) Have I accepted small things from others which I knew were stolen?

7) Have I given away small things that were not mine to give?

8) Have I lied my way out of small debts and obligations?

9) Have I been guilty of petty cheating in games of chance, thus gaining by dishonesty?

10) Have I induced people to give me things by lying about the extent of my property?

11) Have I failed to reveal to others the mistakes they inadvertently made in giving me too much change or more of a commodity than I paid for?

12) Have I neglected to make restitution for small articles I had stolen or unjustly acquired?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I trained myself to remember that "every penny" of stolen goods will have to be repaid in some way before I can enter heaven?

2) Have I a deep conviction that without justice the world would soon become a battlefield where might would always conquer right?

3) Have I tried to cultivate a spirit of detachment from riches and possessions, which is the best preventive of temptations to injustice?

4) Have I, as a parent, inculcated a strict sense of honesty and justice in my children, punishing every slight theft or deceit?

Aspiration

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy kingdom come. (300 days indulgence.) [97]

Prayer

O Lord, who didst impose upon all men the commandment: "Thou shalt not steal," who will demand a strict account of all who have been unjust in their dealings with their neighbor, I am profoundly sorry for every sin and fault whereby I have wronged my fellow-man, and promise to make full reparation. Thy greatest praise of Thy foster father, St. Joseph, was contained in the simple words that "he was a just man." Give me the strength to imitate his praise: to be just in my business affairs and private transactions; to be just in my dealings with those who are subject to me and those to whom I am subject; to be just in making restitution for all my injustices of the past. Let me

not be moved by the example of the world, nor by the desire of riches and power, nor by the urgings of those who take no thought of Thee and of Thy law. Let me be detached from all earthly possessions and not envious of those who have great riches, in order that I may call Thee my only treasure. O Mary, my Mother, obtain for me the grace to deal justly and fairly with all my neighbors.

"And when the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him,
then He will sit on the throne of His glory;
and before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."

(Matthew 25:31-33)

August Chastity

The sixth commandment of the Decalogue is called the difficult commandment; the virtue of chastity is called the angelic virtue. Perhaps it is only right that the virtue that makes man most like an angel should be the most difficult to practice perfectly; always the best things must be paid for at the highest price.

But Christian men and women of today have not only their own unruly flesh and the suggestions of the devil to conquer in attaining chastity; they must contend likewise with the concerted efforts of the world around them to make chastity seem either impossible or not worthwhile. Pseudo-intellectuals scoff at chastity, and if some of them could have their way, concepts like immodesty, adultery, lust, sensuality, etc., would be stricken from the minds of all mankind. Many who do not go so far as to deny the virtue of chastity in theory, nevertheless live as if it were impossible of attainment, and frankly tell their friends and neighbors that it is impossible for them, too. Worst of all, there are some Catholics (so called) who join hands with the pagan world in discouraging the practice of chastity. Count among them those who both practice and preach birth-prevention; those who philander while married themselves, or with others who are married; those who take part in the dissemination of obscene and inflammatory incentives to lust. Chastity becomes doubly difficult in the face of such influences to the contrary.

Chastity is defined as the virtue by which, with the help of God's grace attained by prayer and the Sacraments, **human beings are enabled to refrain from all misuse of their sex faculties**. This implies two things:

1) that they never directly desire or consent to sex pleasure outside the sphere and contrary to the purposes for which sex-pleasure was intended. The proper sphere of sex activity is the state of marriage, and there it is intended as a means of procreation and of the expression of love between husband and wife. To directly desire and seek sex-pleasure in marriage while excluding by interference the purpose of procreation, or to desire and indulge it in any direct way outside of marriage, would always be a grave sin.

2) The definition of chastity also implies that human beings must avoid those unnecessary actions that indirectly but usually lead to indulgence in sex-pleasure, even though the latter be not intended at the beginning. Thus to read obscene books would be seriously inducive to consent in sex-pleasure. Sometimes, of course, an unnecessary action is only slightly inducive to consent to sinful pleasure; in that case it would constitute a venial sin.

Misunderstanding arises in the minds of some by the oft-quoted principle: In matters of chastity there is no lightness of matter; every sin is a grave sin. This is true, it must be known, in regard to all direct and voluntary desires and indulgences in sex-pleasure outside of marriage or contrary to the purpose of sex. Nevertheless, some sins

against chastity may be venial because of lack of full consent of the will, or because of lack of full deliberation, or because an action, such as a momentary indecent glance, or a passing thought, could not be called gravely inducive to sinful consent.

Self-examination on the virtue of chastity must keep these fundamental principles in view.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I deliberately taken delight in impure thoughts and images in my mind after I recognized them to be evil?

2) Have I knowingly consented to a desire for impure experiences, without any effort to suppress the desire?

3) Have I taken part in impure conversation for the express purpose of giving others bad thoughts or with the realization that they would probably consent to bad thoughts?

4) Have I gone out of my way to hear impure conversation or taken sinful pleasure in it when I heard it?

5) Have I read obscene books or looked at obscene pictures after I knew that they would cause serious temptations to sins of impurity?

6) Have I gone to places where I knew the entertainment was lewd and immoral, or attended obscene stage shows or movies?

7) Have I touched others impurely, or taken part in prolonged and intense kisses and embraces?

8) Have I caused or consented to solitary lust?

9) Have I taken part in sins of lust with others, and were they married or single, of the same sex or the opposite sex?

10) Have I sinned with someone related to me by blood or affinity?

11) Have I added sacrilege to the sin of impurity by desiring, or attempting, or consenting to sin with a person consecrated to God?

12) Have I made animals a means or an occasion of seriously sinful actions?

13) Have I forced another to submit to my lustful actions?

14) Have I encouraged others to sin against purity or told them that they could not avoid it?

15) Have I exposed others to grave danger by impure signs, actions, or exposure?

16) (for married persons) Have I used contraceptive means whether natural (such as interruption) or artificial (such as instruments) in performing marriage duties?

17) Have I, without a good reason, refused or neglected to render the marriage obligation when seriously asked?

18) Have I, as a married person, committed sins of impurity with others, and were they married or single?

19) Have I failed to correct or train my children in regard to chastity when it was evident that there was need of such correction or training?

20) Have I exercised no watchfulness over the company-keeping of my adolescent sons and daughters, permitting and encouraging them to spend long hours alone and in dangerous circumstances?

21) Have I bought or sold, lent or given, obscene books or magazines or other objects to be used for impure purposes?

Venial Sins

1) Have I, without a reason, read books or magazines that were at least dangerous, or concerned only with impassioned love?

2) Have I allowed my eyes to wander in curiosity over dangerous objects?

3) Have I been slow and half-hearted in trying to banish bad thoughts and desires?

4) Have I permitted decent expressions of love or friendship for another to be prolonged to the point of danger of lust?

5) Have I gone to shows or movies that I knew to be somewhat dangerous, at least in part?

6) Have I been careless about my clothing, posture, appearance, thus exposing others to some danger?

7) Have I shown half-deliberate interest in the evil conversation of others?

8) Have I, on the spur of the moment, uttered double-meaning words or phrases?

9) Have I sought out or continued companionship with others whom I knew to be inclined to evil jests and words?

10) Have I supported the publishers of daring and dangerous picture magazines or of borderline periodicals by buying or spreading their publications in any way?

11) Have I neglected to use special opportunities of grace and prayer when I was passing through a period of more than usual temptation?

12) Have I failed to check vigorously impulses and daydreams of unruly love and affection?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I learned the necessity of praying daily for the grace to remain pure?

2) Have I acquired the habit of saying an ejaculatory prayer when evil thoughts, desires, or inclinations arise?

3) Have I made regular or frequent use of the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion as a means of strength against impurity?

4) Have I practiced any special devotion to Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, whose example and intercession are powerful aids to purity?

5) Have I trained my will power for strength in temptation by practicing some form of voluntary mortification?

6) Have I tried to avoid idleness, daydreaming, sloth, knowing that to keep occupied is one of the best defenses against impurity?

7) Have I made known even my serious temptations in confession, realizing that to reveal temptations is to gain strength against them?

8) Have I been diligent in observing even the smaller rules of modesty, such as not to touch others even carelessly, and not to let my eyes wander too freely in public?

Aspiration

O Mary, through thy Immaculate Conception, keep my body pure and my soul holy. (300 days indulgence.) [326]

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast said: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God," grant me the grace of spotless chastity. Thou didst favor St. John with a special mark of Thy friendship because of Thy great love for the holy virtue; let me practice this virtue according to my state that I, too, may be Thy special friend. I am sorry for every fault committed against purity in the past; for every undisciplined thought, for every evil word, for every sensual or impure action. For the future I promise that I shall call upon Thy name and the name of Thy Immaculate Mother in every temptation that assails me; I shall avoid every occasion of sin that might lead me to seek for sinful gratification; I shall insist on chastity in word and deed from those around me; and I shall mortify my body in order that it may be strengthened against the assaults of evil desire. Moreover, I shall try to make some atonement for all the sins that are committed against chastity in the world, which made Thy physical pain so great in Thy bitter passion. I dedicate my life to the defense of this virtue, that the Christian home may be defended and protected and that many souls may be saved from the terrible condemnation that impurity must receive. O Mary, Immaculate Mother, inspire in my heart thy own great love of the virtue of purity.

"Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but within they are full of robbery and uncleanness. Thou blind Pharisee! clean first the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside, too, may be clean.

Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you are like whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear just to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

(Matthew 23: 25-28)

September Temperance

Temperance is defined as the virtue by which a man has the power to control his concupiscible appetites, especially those that are appealed to through the sense of taste and the sense of touch. **Concupiscible appetites are man's appetites for sense pleasure.** The two strongest sense pleasures that are within the experience of man are those related to the preservation of his body, enjoyed through eating and drinking, and those related to the preservation of the race, enjoyed through the relationships of sex.

The virtue of chastity, is, therefore, a species of temperance, but since it has been treated in a special examen, the present one will confine itself to temperance in eating and drinking. Just as in matters pertaining to sex there is lawful and unlawful indulgence in sense pleasure, so in eating and drinking. God created the appetites and pleasures connected with eating and drinking and the objects that satisfy them, so that man would have an added incentive for preserving his life by taking nourishment. When the pleasure of eating and drinking is not separated from the purpose of self-preservation, and not contrary to it by being harmful to either body or soul, then it is morally good.

Opposed to temperance in this restricted sense are the sins of gluttony and drunkenness. These have always been pre-eminently pagan vices, from the time of the ancient

Roman epicureans down to modern times when neo-paganism has promoted the eager pursuit of pleasures of sense for their own sake alone. Opposed to intemperance is the practice of mortification, whereby one not only rejects inordinate indulgence in the pleasures of sense, but practices self-denial even in some lawful things so that he will be strengthened in will against the assaults of temptation. Sins against temperance may be outlined as follows:

Mortal Sins

1) Have I, as a physician, nurse, or attendant, deliberately given medicine or food to a sick person which I knew would bring about their death?

2) Have I drunk intoxicating liquor to the extent that I lost control of my senses?

3) Have I sold intoxicating liquor to one whom I knew to be on the verge of intoxication?

4) Have I made my family suffer grave privation by spending most of my income on drink?

5) Have I knowingly broken my fast and then received Holy Communion?

6) Have I broken the law of abstinence by deliberately eating meat on a day of abstinence, unless excused or dispensed?

7) Have I, without a reason of health or hard work or without a dispensation, broken the law of fast by taking more than one full meal on a day of fast?

8) Have I used drugs or narcotics, not under a doctor's orders, but for the sake of losing consciousness or with the danger of becoming an addict?

9) Have I, without serious reason, given drugs to others whom I knew to be in danger of becoming addicts?

Venial Sins

1) Have I semi-deliberately made myself indisposed by overeating?

2) Have I given in to gluttony by nibbling almost every hour of the day?

3) Have I been indiscreet in not obeying the advice of a doctor as to my choice of foods?

4) Have I eaten slightly more than was permitted on days of fast when I had no excuse or dispensation?

5) Have I taken more intoxicating liquor than was good for me, even though I did not become actually drunk?

6) Have I run the risk of either harming my health or becoming an addict of drink by taking some form of alcohol too frequently?

7) Have I spent more than I could rightly afford on intoxicating beverages?

8) Have I jested about drunkenness and so lessened others' hatred of it as a grave sin?

9) Have I encouraged others to drink more than was good for them?

10) Have I broken a promise or pledge not to drink intoxicating liquor for a certain period of time?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I practiced any mortification of taste either by denying myself certain foods or by not eating at certain times?

2) Have I meditated on the thirst of our Lord on the Cross, that I might be inspired to share his suffering for my sins?

3) Have I tried to use my influence over friends and acquaintances to prevent any kind of overindulgence in alcohol?

4) Have I prayed before and after meals, both to show gratitude to God for His gifts and to ask for strength not to misuse them?

5) Have I realized that intemperance in eating or drinking easily leads to intemperance in the form of lust?

Aspiration

O good Jesus, within Thy wounds hide me. (300 days indulgence.) [169]

Prayer

O gentle Jesus, who didst suffer agonizing thirst on the Cross to atone for the many sins that would be committed through the sense of taste, accept my sorrow for all my lack of mortification and my many sins in this regard. Thou didst bestow on us so many things which we did not deserve that it should be impossible even to think of offending Thee by misusing them in any way. And yet our ingratitude reaches even so far that we have been unwilling to share in the smallest way the many and great privations of Thy own life and death, and have rebelled against Thy commandments and Thy Church in gratifying excessively the appetites Thou hast given us. Let me atone for my own sins of the past by acquiring strong habits of mortification, and let me make reparation for the many sins of gluttony and drunkenness in the world by penance and self-denial. O Mary, Mother of Christ, obtain for me the grace to use rightly and reasonably all the good things bestowed on me by God.

October Obedience

The first commandment in the Decalogue, after the three which deal with man's duties to God, is that which reads: Honor thy father and thy mother. There is a reason for its being mentioned at the head of the list of those which comprise man's duties to his fellow-man. The reason is that, in the order of nature, a human being's first relationships are toward the parents who were responsible for his coming into the world and on whom he is dependent through many helpless years.

The law of obedience, in regard to children, is really a law of self-preservation. When the child is born, it is incapable of caring for itself in any way. Its helplessness and dependence, in somewhat diminishing degree, continue for many years. Unless others provide for its physical needs, its intellectual needs, its moral and spiritual needs, it will never reach perfect maturity. This dependence can be made fruitful and effective unto self-preservation and development only by obedience, respect, honor, and love toward those whose responsibility it is to provide for the child.

But children are not the only ones on whom the obligation of obedience falls. **Whenever there is a necessary dependence of one man upon another, either in the natural or supernatural order, there are obligations of obedience.** Thus, in the natural order, the citizen owes obedience to the state; the workman to his

employer; the pupil to the teacher. Accordingly, in the supernatural order, the parishioner owes obedience to the pastor, and the religious to his superiors.

Indirectly, obedience also imposes obligations on those who hold authority to direct and command others. There is a right use of authority and a wrong use; it can be neglected or abused to the detriment of subjects. **Therefore, every form of obedience involves obligations on the part of those in command.** The sins of both subjects and superiors are therefore outlined here.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I deliberately given in to hatred of my mother or my father, refusing to speak to them over a considerable period of time?

2) Have I deliberately wished serious harm to my parents, e.g., that they would die so that I might possess their goods?

3) Have I habitually treated my parents harshly, speaking contemptuously to them or of them, ridiculing them, cursing them, causing them severe pain and sorrow?

4) Have I refused to relieve the serious needs of my parents when I was able to do so, leaving them dependent on strangers for necessary food, clothing, or without medical care in sickness and danger of death?

5) Have I done nothing to ensure spiritual care for my mother or father when it was needed, neglecting to provide for their receiving the Sacraments in danger of death?

6) Have I, as a lawyer or politician or influential business man, used my power to break down or render useless just laws of the state made for the welfare of all?

7) Have I purposely struck my mother or father in resentment or deliberate bad will?

8) Have I disobeyed parents when they forbade my going with bad companions, or to bad shows and dangerous places?

9) Have I, as an official of the state, seriously failed in my duty by accepting bribes, permitting corruption, letting criminals off, etc.?

10) Have I, as a parishioner, fomented rebellion and disobedience among the people of a parish, by slander, conspiracy, etc., against my pastor?

11) Have I upset the home of my parents by frequently disobeying the rules they had a right to make — concerning the persons to be brought into the house, concerning the hours I kept at night, concerning decent conduct within the home?

12) Have I, when earning money while living under the parental roof or while still subject to parents, refused to give them part of my earnings when they needed it or demanded it?

13) Have I, as a parent, given in to deliberate hatred of a son or daughter, by continual mistreatment, cursing, driving them out of my home without a serious reason?

14) Have I failed entirely to teach and discipline my children in serious matters such as morality and religion?

15) Have I, with deliberate and grave carelessness, endangered the life of a child, either by seriously dangerous conduct before birth, or by neglect of proper attention through the years of infancy?

16) Have I failed to have my child baptized at least within two weeks or thereabouts after birth, when there was no serious obstacle to so doing?

17) Have I given serious bad example to my children, by cursing in their presence, by serious quarreling, by impure talk, by neglecting serious religious obligations?

18) Have I failed to correct and punish my children for serious wrongs, or to forbid them to enter serious occasions of sin?

19) Have I refused to send my children to a Catholic school when I could have done so and had no permission from bishop or pastor to do otherwise?

20) Have I selfishly interfered with the vocation of a son or daughter when God seemed to be calling them to marriage or to a religious vocation and I had no serious reason for refusing to let them go?

21) Have I, as a pupil in school, seriously undermined the authority and harmed the work of my teacher by slander, rebellion, etc.,?

22) Have I, as a teacher, seriously neglected my duties by failing to prepare myself in any way for my classes, by not teaching subjects I was hired to teach, etc.?

23) Have I, as an employee, failed to a grave degree in carrying out commands of an employer for which I was hired, or fomented rebellion and disobedience and sabotage among others?

24) Have I, as am employer, been seriously unjust to one or many of my employees, by driving them tyrannically, by demanding more than human nature could do, by allowing inhuman working conditions?

Venial Sins

1) Have I failed to show love and gratitude to my parents, either by neglecting opportunities to do so, or by positively hurting them in small ways?

2) Have I failed in the respect due my parents, by laughing at them, being openly ashamed of them, talking harshly or angrily to them, saying unkind things about them?

3) Have I disobeyed my parents in small things that they commanded or forbade?

4) Have I lied to my parents to avoid a reprimand or punishment?

5) Have I been stubborn and peevish and openly resentful against parents?

6) Have I neglected to ask or take advice from parents in matters in which their knowledge and experience are meant to guide me?

7) Have I selfishly refused to make life more comfortable and enjoyable for my parents when I could have done so?

8) Have I, in my own mature years, left my parents alone, seldom visiting them, seldom showing any gratitude or love?

9) As a parent, have I slothfully neglected the lesser duties I owed to my children, such as taking an interest in their school work, explaining difficult religious matters to them, encouraging extra habits of piety?

10) Have I given bad example to my children in venial matters, by anger, gossip, lying, etc.?

11) Have I failed to cooperate with teachers of my children by criticizing them to the children, countermanding some of their orders, etc.?

12) Have I, as a pupil in school, been disrespectful and disobedient to teachers?

13) Have I, as a teacher, given bad example to pupils, or failed to prepare well for my classes, or to fulfill minor obligations I assumed?

14) Have I, as an employee, been disobedient to just orders given by my employer, thus causing slight losses?

15) Have I, as an employer, given way to anger, partiality, unfairness in dealing with my employees?

16) Have I, as a citizen, disregarded laws made for the safety and well-being of all, or ridiculed those in authority who made the laws?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I convinced myself of the truth that all valid authority comes from God, and that obedience to such authority is obedience to God?

2) As a son or daughter, have I ever reflected on the gratitude I owe to parents, which is the basis of the love, respect, and obedience I owe them?

3) Have I trained myself to overlook the human faults in those who hold authority, remembering that these faults do not remove my obligation of obedience to all just commands?

4) Have I meditated on what chaos would engulf the world if there were no obedience, and on how much misery has already been caused by rebellion against authority?

5) Have I realized the old Scriptural principle that obedience to parents in youth is the surest means of gaining loyal obedience from others when I may be placed in authority?

6) Have I meditated on the example of Christ, who became man out of obedience and who was obedient to all lawful authority even unto His death?

Aspiration

All for Thee, most Sacred Heart of Jesus! (300 days indulgence.) [203]

Prayer

O Jesus, my Savior, Thou didst say on entering the world: "I am come to do Thy will, O God," and didst fulfill Thy promise by becoming obedient even unto the death of the cross — O, do Thou teach me to be obedient in all things like unto Thee. In the past I have often rebelled against those who represent Thy own authority; permit me now by Thy grace to rebel no longer. Thou didst obey Mary and Joseph at Nazareth, and all Thy civil and religious rulers. Let me see in my own superiors the same divine authority Thou didst obey, no matter what human defects Thy representatives may possess. And if Thou willest that I should have authority over others in any sphere, grant that I may exercise that authority with the same gentleness, meekness, kindness, and charity that were always present

in Thee. O Mary, who didst say to the angel who represented God: "Be it done unto me according to thy word," let me echo thy beautiful submission whenever God's will is made known to me through my superiors.

"The Lord hath given Him power and honor and a kingdom; and all peoples, tribes and tongues shall serve Him. The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; the nations shall be laid waste as a desert."

Lauds (Festival of Christ the King)

November Meekness

Meekness is the virtue that enables one to overcome the tendencies of anger, revenge, hatred, and enmity. Many of its manifestations have already been listed under the heading of charity, because the principal incentives to anger come from the words or actions of a fellow human being. Thus meekness presupposes the virtue of charity or love of neighbor, which provides the motives and the means of overlooking insult, injustice, and injury, real or imaginary, from others.

The vice of anger, to which meekness is opposed, is responsible for very much of the misery in the world. It is a vice in which an animal passion in man is permitted to dominate his words and actions as if he possessed neither reason nor free will. In the brute animals, anger is directed by instinct to the purposes of self-defense and self-preservation, as exemplified when a brute fights for food, or against an enemy, or in defense of its young. **In man, anger is also designed by nature to be a means of self-defense and self-preservation, but, like all the passions, in him it is meant to be under the complete control of reason and free will.** This means that even in a man who possesses merely natural virtue, all motivations to anger must be trained to submit to the judgment of reason, and that the will be permitted to act, not on the suggestion of anger but on the judgment of reason. A man who possesses supernatural virtue has all the teachings of

faith to assist his judgment in deciding against the impulses of anger.

Anger, therefore, as a vice, is the habit of acting as the passion dictates without subjecting it to reason or faith. One who habitually acts thus, indulging in intemperate words and vicious actions, places himself below the level of the brutes. Brutes are guided at least by instinct. Reason is to take the place of that instinct in man, and when it is abandoned there is nothing left but blind and selfish force.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I deliberately permitted myself to become so violently angry that it destroyed my reason for a time and made me incapable of acting like a human being?

2) Have I hurt others seriously in anger?

3) Have I knowingly and deliberately made others angry to a point where they were bereft of reason?

4) Have I planned revenge against others, looking for an opportunity to do serious harm to them?

5) Have I actually taken revenge by doing serious harm, e.g., by ruining a person's business, by destroying his reputation, by stealing?

6) Have I permitted anger against others to become hatred, so that I wished them serious misfortune and refused to speak to them for a considerable length of time?

7) Have I refused to forgive others who had wronged me and who asked for forgiveness in a direct or indirect way?

8) After causing another to show signs of hatred for me, have I refused to show by any sign that I wanted to be forgiven?

9) Have I induced others to hate their neighbors by working on their anger and providing motives for continued hatred?

10) Have I, through jealousy of others, deliberately tried to destroy a good work that they were doing or to hamper it seriously?

Venial Sins

1) Have I taken part in petty quarrels and bitter arguments?

2) Have I given in to sudden spurts of anger by harsh words, by calling names, by abusive language?

3) Have I shown dislike and antipathy for others by snubbing them, by being sarcastic toward them, or by any unkindness?

4) Have I given in to moods of sullenness and moroseness towards others?

5) Have I shown sensitiveness and hurt feelings over trifling matters?

6) Have I carried and shown a grudge against others for some time?

7) Have I talked back peevishly to superiors when I was corrected?

8) Have I, as a superior, corrected others in the heat of anger?

9) Have I shown envy of others by picking at their characters, by lessening their esteem in the eyes of others?

10) Have I teased others until I made them angry?

11) Have I approved and promoted the angry feelings of others?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I analyzed the nature of anger as a passion and recognized how it should be subjected to reason?

2) Have I realized that giving in to anger signifies the presence of great pride, because one who does not try to control his anger thinks so highly of himself that he believes no one should cross him in any way?

3) Have I ever meditated on the example of Christ, especially how He practiced silence when His enemies hired criminal witnesses to testify against Him?

4) Have I reminded myself often of the words of Christ: "If any man be angry with his brother he shall be in danger of the judgment"?

5) Do I know that not anger but meekness is the greatest sign of strength of character a person can give?

6) Am I aware that an ungovernable temper is the surest sign that a person is incapable of leading or ruling others in any way?

Aspiration

O God, grant us union of minds in truth and union of hearts in charity. (300 days indulgence.) [10]

Prayer

O sweet Redeemer, how great is the contrast between Thy conduct, under insult and injury, and mine! Thou was silent when they accused Thee falsely; Thou didst not complain when they crowned Thee with thorns and scourged Thee at the pillar; Thou didst pray for the forgiveness of even those who nailed Thee to Thy cross. And I — how quick I have been to show resentment for even the unintended slights I received; how often I have plotted revenge against someone for an imaginary wrong,

and how long I have harbored ill-feelings toward others within my heart. I am sorry that I have been so unworthy a follower of Thee. Grant me the grace to be prompt to forgive; to be generous with those who are niggardly with me; to be meek and patient whenever I am tempted to anger. O Mary, who didst share in the ignominy of Thy Son's passion and death without complaint, obtain for me the grace to overcome every temptation to hatred and anger.

"For Thy power, O Lord, is not in a multitude, nor is Thy pleasure in the strength of horses, nor from the beginning have the proud been acceptable to Thee: but the prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased Thee.

Judith 9:16

December Humility

Pride is defined as an inordinate love of one's own excellence. It is called an inordinate love because everyone is bound to love self in an ordinate or rational way, which means to love self inasmuch as and after the manner in which one is loved by God. God loves every human being that He has created; this means that God desires the happiness and salvation of each one and directs all His laws and all His providence and all His gifts and graces to these ends. **A rightful love of self is really reducible to the love of God**, because it means seeking what God seeks, conforming self to God's will, fulfilling God's plans in regard to one's destiny.

An inordinate love of self or of one's excellence means setting oneself against God and above God. For example, it means attributing to one's own judgment a higher value than to the wisdom of God. It means thinking that one can find and follow a better road to happiness than that made known by the all-wise God. It means rebelling against God because it is assumed that God does not know what is best for one's body and soul.

It stands to reason, therefore, that pride is in some way responsible for every deliberate sin that is ever committed. If a person sins through lust or indulgence in forbidden sense pleasure, it is fundamentally because he believes he can find some happiness in that, whereas by keeping God's law happiness could not be attained. If a person sins

through malice, i.e., by deliberately breaking a law like that of hearing Mass on Sunday, it is radically because he thinks that God made a useless law. If he sins through fear of poverty or pain, then it is because he will not admit that God can take care of those who keep His law. So with every kind of sin: in some way it signifies pride, assuming that the sinner knows more than God or can do more than God or can find greater happiness in rebellion against God than by remaining subject to His authority and by keeping His law.

For this reason it is difficult to enumerate mortal and venial sins that are sins of pride alone. Pride usually reveals itself in the breaking of some specific law that God has made. However, in order to trace the influence of pride in our lives, it is well to examine our minds for the motives of various sins, because it will quickly be found that pride is a major factor in all. Thus sins already contained in previous examinations of this series will be repeated here, with special reference to the form of pride that causes them. The list will not be exhaustive but representative of how pride works.

Of course, the only remedy for pride is humility. **Humility is the fundamental virtue by which a person remembers his utter dependence on God and God's laws and God's providence**, and the utter folly of any action or any judgment or any self-glorification that is contrary to the will of God.

Mortal Sins

1) Have I considered myself capable of reading forbidden books without permission — books dealing with things contrary to my faith or destructive of morals — because I thought my judgment about these things was better than that of God and His Church which forbids such reading?

2) Have I decided that it could do me no harm to attend non-Catholic services even though God's law and the law of His Church forbid it?

3) Have I made light of or even ridiculed certain doctrines or laws of the Catholic religion, as if I knew more than Christ or His Church?

4) Have I, with but a shallow and mediocre training in religious teaching, presumed to make quick judgments about doctrines I hardly even understood?

5) Have I shown my independence of God by missing Mass on Sunday without a reason, by eating meat on abstinence days, by refusing to fast on days appointed, etc.?

6) Have I practically expressed the conviction that I know more than God and His Church by refusing to send my children to a Catholic school, or by saying that I do not believe a Catholic education is necessary for a Catholic child?

7) Have I drawn others into sins of impurity on the ground that God's law in this matter is old-fashioned, impossible, unimportant, or harmful?

8) Have I practiced any form of preventing conception in marriage because I maintained that God's law could not be kept, or, if kept, would result in too much hardship?

9) Have I refused to forgive someone who wronged me because I considered my honor a more valuable thing than that of God, who forgave His enemies and commanded me to forgive mine?

10) Have I slandered others because I thought revenge against them was necessary for my honor even though it is forbidden by God?

11) Have I used unjust methods in business because I deemed it more important for me to make money and "to get ahead" than to be obedient to God?

12) Have I used sinful means to attain social or political power because I would rather be above my fellow-human beings than subject to God?

13) Have I rebelled against superiors and the serious commands they gave because I thought my knowledge and dignity freed me from the necessity of obedience?

14) Have I failed to confess certain mortal sins I had committed because I said they were "my own affair," that "they were no business of the priest," that "I could get along without God's forgiveness"?

15) Have I maintained, either in word or action, that it is unnecessary for a man to pray?

Venial Sins

1) Have I been guilty of the form of pride called vanity, by considering myself more intelligent, more learned, more handsome, even more charitable than others?

2) Have I bragged about my accomplishments, my virtues, my abilities?

3) Have I given in to anger against others because I thought myself better than they were, and that they should know better than to cross me?

4) Have I shown my pride in the form of sensitiveness, resentment, pouting, peevishness?

5) Have I talked about the faults of others, as if to say: "I have no faults at all"?

6) Have I complained about God's providence in permitting me certain trials, as if I were deserving of better treatment from Him?

7) Have I looked down on others who were less wealthy, less cultured, less learned, less prominent, less gifted than I?

8) Have I been too proud to take second place in any work or activity, withdrawing from it or hindering it because I could not be first?

9) Have I shown my pride in constant disobedience to my superiors in small things, or by stubbornness and disrespectful language to those who had a right to command me?

10) Have I neglected daily prayer as if I were strong enough and good enough to get along without God's help?

Helps and Counsels

1) Have I realized that humility is the foundation of all other virtues because it keeps me mindful of my complete dependence on God and the need I have of perfectly accepting and accomplishing His will?

2) Have I learned to detest pride as the cause of all sin, the reason for the creation of hell, and the source of all the evil in the world?

3) Have I a consciousness of the just deserts of my sins — so that I am ready to accept any trial or hardship from God to atone for those sins?

4) Am I convinced how foolish it would be to set up my judgment and my little knowledge against the teachings of Christ and of His Church, and against God's knowledge of the past, present, and future?

5) Do I meditate often on the humility of Christ, who emptied Himself of all honor and became a servant to show me what I must be in the eyes of God?

6) Have I adopted this as one of my favorite prayers: "O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine"?

Aspiration

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine. (500 days indulgence.) [1961]

Prayer

My Lord Jesus Christ, who, though Thou wast the Creator and Master of the universe, didst humble Thyself and become a servant to redeem the world, help me to understand that humility is necessary for every other virtue I desire to possess. Thou dost resist the proud and give Thy grace only to the humble. I, therefore, renounce the pride that has caused me to offend Thee so often in the past, that has made me place myself above Thee, the Sovereign Lord of all. Let me prove my humility by accepting cheerfully every humiliation I receive from others; by submitting unreservedly to Thy commands and the authority of Thy Church; by seeking no honor and no recognition from the world, but only Thy approbation and Thy reward. O Mary, whose humility was so pleasing to the Most High, obtain for me the grace to renounce all self-will in complete surrender to God.

"My hand made all these things, and all these things were made, saith the Lord. But to whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words."

(Isaias 66:2)

About the Author

Fr. Donald F. Miller C.Ss.R. (c. 1903-1966) was a native of Grand Rapids, Michigan. He served as rector (c. 1932) of the Redemptorist major seminary in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, and was a longtime editor of *Liguorian* magazine.

Liguorian began in 1911 as a magazine written by a handful of Redemptorist seminarians for their families and friends. With the help of some priest professors, the magazine became a monthly publication in 1913. Preaching missionaries of the order known as the "roadmen" popularized the magazine in their travels and its readership grew until it became the best-known Catholic magazine in America.

In 1947, Fr. Miller acquired a 135-acre former resort 25 miles south of St. Louis, Missouri, to expand St. Alphonsus's apostolate of the pen through the *Liguorian.* There he founded Liguori Publications and Liguori Mission House for the Redemptorist Fathers. As the publishing house needed a post office, he founded the town of Liguori to have a post office. He later also founded a convent for Redemptorist nuns in Liguori.

Liguori Publications remains a thriving apostolate today.